



CITY OF LODI

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

AGENDA TITLE: Consider Eastside Task Force Recommendation

MEETING DATE: February 3, 1993

PREPARED BY: City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Review recommendation and take action as deemed appropriate.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: At its regular meeting of Wednesday, January 20, 1993, the City Council heard a request from Ms. Virginia Snyder for the formation of a group of citizens living on the east side of the City to review and evaluate suggestions and concerns of the residents of that area. Ms. Snyder was advised that this item would appear on this agenda. Attached is some information supplied by Ms. Snyder.

FUNDING: None required

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas A. Peterson
City Manager

TAP:br

Attachment

CCCOM707/TXTA.07A

APPROVED. _____

THOMAS A. PETERSON
City Manager



recycled paper

CC-1

CITY COUNCIL

PHILIP A. PENNINO, Mayor
JACK A. SHELOCK
Mayor Pro Tempore
RAY G. DAVENPORT
STEPHEN J. MANN
JOHN R. (Randy) SNIDER

CITY OF LODI

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THOMAS A. PETERSON
City Manager

JENNIFER M. PERRIN
City Clerk

BOB McNATT
City Attorney

February 5, 1993

Virginia Snyder
412 E. Oak
Lodi, California 95240

Dear Virginia:

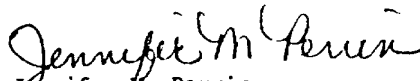
This will confirm the directions given by Mayor Pennino at the City Council meeting of February 3, 1993 to you, Mrs. Virginia Lahr and Mr. John Young regarding the formation of an Eastside Task Force.

Mayor Pennino directed the following:

1. That the three persons listed above meet with staff, in particular the City Attorney, to discuss the ideas and guidelines of the formation of this committee; and
2. To report back to the City Council with your recommendations within 30 days.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact our office.

Very truly yours,


Jennifer M. Perrin
City Clerk

JMP

cc: City Attorney, Bob McNatt

MEASTSID/TXTA.02J

January 25, 1993

To: Lodi City Council
From: Virginia Snyder

Dear Council Member:

An interesting article about Oakland's efforts to fight drugs, crime, and urban decay is attached. If you decide to appoint an eastside task force to look for solutions to Lodi's problems, maybe we can learn from Oakland's experience.

The one thing that troubles me about this article is the apparent differences between the Safe Streets movement and the Oakland Police Department. It's my feeling that any eastside task force should work closely with the Lodi Police Department and also with the Gang Task Force.

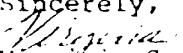
Since my presentation at the last Council meeting, I've received lots of support for an eastside task force. If eastside residents will convert the verbal support into action, I believe within a few years we'll see significant improvement in our eastside neighborhoods. We don't have a lot to lose by trying. Things are getting worse every year.

My prayers are with you as you consider your decision. I know you have to take into account many things I'm not aware of. I also appreciate the fact that the City Council will take the heat for task force recommendations that might be unpopular with certain elements; slum landlords might fall into that category. That's one of the reasons I feel it's vitally important we:

1. Demonstrate how property values rise and maintenance costs go down when rentals are properly managed.
2. Let eastside business people know how valuable they are to the community and do everything we can to create conditions that will allow them to earn a greater profit.
3. Show eastside churches we are a force for decency and good in our city, and solicit their support.
4. Involve Lodi's diverse ethnic groups in the effort.
5. Operate within the framework of existing city ordinances to protect the City of Lodi from possible legal complications.

This started out to be a short note. I'm sure I'm not telling you anything you don't already know. Please approve an eastside task force.

Thanks very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Virginia Snyder

Oakland Agencies Join Community To Fight Crime

Teams have shut down 1,000 drug houses

By Peter Finn
Chronicle Staff Bay Bureau

Ricky Williams stuck his head out from underneath the filthy blanket he used to hide himself and stared directly into the barrel of a gun.

The 24-year-old prison parolee and his friend, Victoria McCroey, 22, cowered amid rotting food and debris in the closet of an Oakland home that had been transformed into a haven for drug addicts and dealers.

"Get out of there," yelled Oakland Police Officer John Hasemeier, waving his 9-millimeter Beretta.

The two crawled out of the closet, too dazed even to hide their crack pipe.

The recent raid was one of more than 1,000 conducted at drug houses since 1986 by the Oakland Police Department's nationally renowned Beat Health Unit.

The unit — made up of a sergeant, eight police officers, five police technicians, a case manager, a community liaison and two city attorneys — has developed a unique "coordinated enforcement" program that draws upon the expertise of various community agencies in the fight against crime.

It is the centerpiece of what Oakland Police Sergeant Bob Crawford hopes will be a broad-based community policing program.

Williams, who was arrested on an outstanding warrant, and McCroey, who was cited for having drug paraphernalia, had broken into the house on 85th Street after it had been left vacant, police said.

Hasemeier said police documented the drug activity, which neighbors reported had been going on for weeks, and alerted the owner about the planned raid.

Housing inspectors, city public works officials and vector control officers accompanied police the day Williams and McCroey were arrested.

Crawford, who established the unit in 1988, said these "multiagency response teams" have been highly successful in closing down crack houses and eliminating blight.

In the past five years, officers have responded to 2,500 requests for service and helped the owners of more than 1,000 homes kick out drug dealers, clean up their property, put up lighting and fences and establish rental and eviction policies, said Diane Dickstein, the case manager for the unit.

In addition, she said, city attorneys assigned to the unit have filed 30 civil suits against uncooperative property owners alleging Drug Nuisance Abatement Act violations and obtained court orders to board up three homes for up to a year.

"We operate on a vocation-based theory of crime prevention," Dickstein said. "It includes teaching the neighbors to create an atmosphere that is hostile to crime."

Nonetheless, many Oakland residents say the problem cannot be solved entirely by the police, no matter how many officers patrol the neighborhoods.

"The people here are tired of the drug activity and they are ready to stand up for themselves," said a 61-year-old resident of 85th Street, who declined to be identified for fear of being singled out by drug dealers in the neighborhood. "The police are helping us, but we are also going to have to help ourselves."

Neighbors Fight Drugs and Win

By Rich DeVoeckie
and Peter Florio
Chronicle Staff Bay Bureau

Four years ago the idea seemed far-fetched: citizens fighting back against entrenched drug activity without relying on the criminal-justice system to make the results stick.

But today, techniques developed by Safe Streets Now, an Oakland-based organization that pioneered the approach nation-

ally in 1968, are earning a place alongside conventional drug-enforcement programs in cities from Stockton to Fayetteville, N.C.

"Other people have been very excited about what is opening with the program and have their own variations," said Herman Goldstein, a University of Wisconsin law professor.

"They are exporting the message that if citizens are sufficiently annoyed by problems that exist in their area, there are things

they can do through the legal system to improve conditions."

The system is simple: Neighbors discreetly monitor a property, keeping logs of possible illegal activity. Safe Streets, acting as the neighbors' legal agent, collects the information at its downtown office. When enough evidence has been gathered, the people go to small claims court and argue that the owners are violating municipal

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in public safety, but differences remain on how big and how soon. Wetzel believes a dominant role for civilians is integral to community-oriented policing, and the sooner the better.

Varying Ideas

Wetzel and the department have pursued their own versions of the idea. Central to the department's program is redeploying patrol officers from citywide to neighborhood duty. Later this year, the department plans to assign one officer to each of the

city's 35 police beats. The officers' duties will include foot patrol and working closely with neighborhood organizations on crime problems.

The department's other major component of community policing, its Beat Health program, will continue operating at the existing level, with one sergeant and five officers. Like Safe Streets, Beat Health closes drug houses. But unlike the civilian program, it confronts property owners with evidence of criminal activity before taking them to court.

Since 1968, Beat Health has forced the owners of 997 dilapidated homes to kick out drug dealers, clean up property, put in fences and adequate lighting, and establish rental and eviction policies, said Diane Dickstein, the program's case manager.

"The whole idea of community policing is a partnership between the police department and the community," said Deputy Chief Robert Nichelini. "The strategy is to have officers assigned to a particular beat 24 hours a day and work with community groups like Safe Streets and anybody else we can find that wants to work with us."

But Wetzel, in a presentation this month to the city's Community Policing Task Force, said the redeployment of patrol officers is inconsistent with community policing. "This tactic is merely an add-on to the present system," she wrote. "This half-way method is doomed to failure."

The danger of such a step, according to Wetzel, is that the message it sends to citizens is exactly what community policing tries to reverse: that the police department is the cavalry, riding in to solve every neighborhood's troubles.

"My worry is there's a false expectation that unless the community stands up to take responsibility, crime and violence will continue," she said. "I see people thinking they can buy officers and sit back on their haunches and point the finger."

While praising Beat Health, she questioned how large a role that program should be given in an overall strategy of community policing. "It's labor-intensive, it's time-consuming, it's classic 'we'll do it for you,'" she said.

She proposed a number of additional programs that would coexist with Beat Health, including letting communities define their own police beats, creating a citywide resource center where citizens could learn how to keep their neighborhoods safe and clean without having to call the police department, and setting up "Quality of Life Neighborhood Councils" whose mission would be to deal not only with crime and violence but with the broader issues of neighborhood revitalization.

Although Wetzel is confident that the two sides will work out their differences, she said the police department must undergo "a major retooling," adopting community policing as a department-wide philosophy.

It is considered a good bet that Oakland's next police chief will move the department toward that very goal. Longtime Chief George Hart retired last year, and the city

is searching for a replacement. "Whoever becomes the next police chief, I believe, will subscribe to and perhaps even be a leader in the community-oriented policing movement," said Jeron Skolnick, a University of California at Berkeley sociology and law professor.

active seems to be working. Values in the affected beats have risen by \$15,000.

ing up similar programs came from 25 other states and the District of Columbia last year.

Still A Struggle

Despite Wetzel's successes — she is considered an ardent promoter — frustrations remain. In Oakland, they center on the relationships between community organizations and the police department.

"It's been a struggle in Oakland to get this tool accepted," said Wetzel, a former aide to City Councilman Dick Speer. "Any kind of new and innovative program takes time for people to understand."

Now, largely because of the visible results of Safe Streets, a rough consensus is emerging that puts citizen organizing on a level with traditional police action in the city's long-range strategy for keeping neighborhoods safe.

Oakland is moving toward a new philosophy of making the most of limited police services in neighborhoods — known as "community-oriented policing" — and these relationships are at the heart of it.

According to Wetzel, the police department has come to accept the need for an expanded civilian role

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"It was a real happy ending. We were all expecting it to come back, but it hasn't."

Safe Streets' current caseload includes 66 suspected drug houses in 21 Oakland neighborhoods. Six more neighborhoods will be added this year, and there is a waiting list of 18.

Elsewhere in California, 46 cities have asked Safe Streets for assistance. And calls for help in set-

ting up similar programs came from 25 other states and the District of Columbia last year.

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Berniece M. Vaughan
2044 Kennedy Court
Lodi, California 95240

Mrs. Berniece Vaughan
2044 Kennedy Court
Lodi, CA 95240
868-0418



Steve Mann.
City Hall.
Lodi, Ca.

RECEIVED
93 FEB -9 PM 10:30
CITY CLERK

Feb 5, 1993

Dear Steve.

I have recently bought a fine place
on the east side of town. Wednesday night
some hoodlums threw a piece of wood through an

apartments bedroom window, narrowly missing a
little girl who was sleeping there.

I lived for many years on the east side
of town and know that most of the people there are
kind and thoughtful but in light of these who

are, I'd just like to see police protection
stepped-up there, or something done
to up-grade that part of

our beautiful little
town.
Steven

500 E. Elm